



Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Prichard, AL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

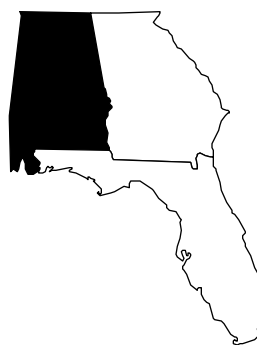
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA Region 4 selected the City of Prichard for a Regional Brownfields Pilot. The City's brownfields project covers three geographic areas within the City: East Prichard, Eight Mile, and Whistler communities. The City has selected six brownfields sites comprising approximately 86 acres located throughout the three Prichard communities. A combination of potential environmental hazards, general deterioration, and the social environment has significantly slowed development in Prichard. Prichard is the most economically depressed city in the State and is designated as an Empowerment Zone (EZ) by the State of Alabama.

East Prichard is home to approximately 80% of the City's population of minorities and is experiencing a deteriorating infrastructure, a high percentage of low and moderate income households, and a declining economic base. The Eight Mile community is the largest land area in the City and the least developed and sparsely populated. Found within this community are Chickasabogue Park, the State designated Africatown Park, and High Pointe Golf Course (City owned). The Whistler community is one of the oldest communities in the Mobile, Alabama area with houses dating back to the early 1800's. The Whistler Community is also home to the Whistler Historic District, the proposed Casey Jones Whistler Museum and

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Prichard, Alabama

Date of Award:
September 1996

Amount: \$100,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets implementation of a strategy for reuse of under-used sites, with concentration on the Whistler Historical District.

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Park, Main Street Industrial Area, and Whistler Station.

Studies have indicated the existence of soil and groundwater contamination with metal, volatiles, and semi-volatile organic compounds. The EPA Brownfields Pilot program will allow the City to pursue the resolution of the environmental concerns at the brownfield sites and position the City for cleanup and redevelopment.

OBJECTIVES

The focus of Prichard's Brownfields Pilot is to: 1) develop a Comprehensive Environmental/Redevelopment Plan for brownfields sites including site identification, characterization, and inventory, and to identify or establish an appropriate local based authority to oversee the brownfields redevelopment projects and ensure public participation and decision-making throughout the process; 2) identify innovative financing mechanisms for the brownfields redevelopment projects; and 3) prepare outreach materials to communicate the benefits of the brownfields sites' development.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Selected six brownfields sites in the City of Prichard for brownfields assessment;
- Formed a Neighborhood Association Funding Program, which includes active neighborhood associations to coordinate community involvement in all phases of the project, with the focus on environmental justice;
- Received approval from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for the Environmental Phase I and II site assessments and remediation plan for Casey Jones site. ADEM plans to provide site assessment for other selected brownfields sites and will assist with economic redevelopment activities; and
- Conducted an Urban Area Workshop, Health Fair Awareness day, health surveys and Environmental Justice Awareness surveys in conjunction with Alabama A&M and Tuskegee Universities.

The Pilot is:

- Implementing the Comprehensive Environmental/Redevelopment Plan;
- Creating an Environmental Clearinghouse to serve the local area; and
- Coordinating with two historical black universities (Public/Private Academic Partnership) for assistance with the brownfields program. The universities are: Tuskegee University's Engineering and Architectural Department and School of Environmental Science; and Alabama A & M University's School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, along with the Department of Urban Studies and Community Planning.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Prichard Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- The Alabama Historical Commission has committed to working together with all partners to register sites and structures for designation on the National Historic Register.
- The Alabama Historical Commission's architects have committed to work with the City of Prichard's architects on the Casey Jones building to ensure proper renovation is implemented.
- A working relationship has been established with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program Initiative to include the brownfields initiative to better establish economic development and stakeholder participation.